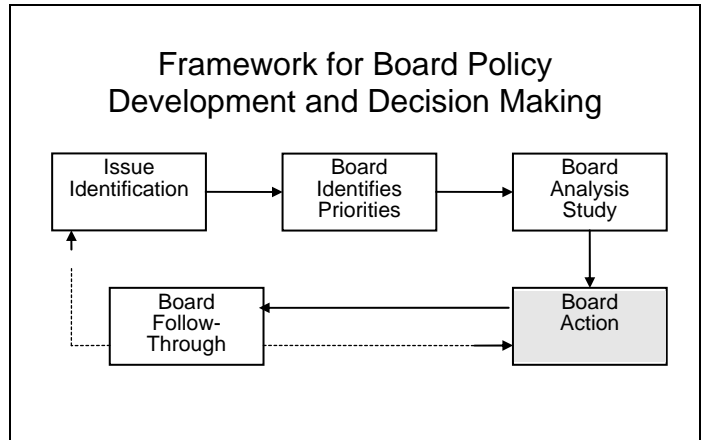


Iowa State Board of Education

Executive Summary

May 14, 2008



Agenda Item: Renewal of Iowa Central Charter School
Southeast Webster Grand Community School District
Burnside, Iowa

Iowa Goal: All K-12 students will achieve at a high level.

Equity Impact Statement: Iowa public charter schools are required to be open to all students in accordance with Iowa's non-discrimination policies.

Presenter: Consent Agenda

Attachments: Two

Recommendation: It is recommended that the State Board approve the renewal of charter status of Iowa Central Charter School.

Background: The 2002 legislature enacted a limited public charter schools law. The Iowa Department of Education was also awarded Public Charter School funding from the U.S. Department of Education. Schools submitting a successful application could receive up to \$400,000 for a 36-month period. Southeast Webster Grand was among the initial districts in Iowa to receive federal funding and be granted charter status.

Charter status is granted for a period of four years. After the initial four year contract for a charter school and at the end of each renewal period thereafter, the school board that established the charter school shall, in the absence of revoking the charter, take affirmative action to renew a charter school contract. The Southeast Webster Grand District is seeking renewal of its charter status for the 2008-09 school year. No funding is currently attached with this status.

Background Information on Charter Schools in Iowa

What is a charter school? Very broadly defined, a charter school is a privately run, publicly financed school run by parents, educators, and companies.

The authority for charter schools in Iowa can be found in Iowa Code 256F.1 which states charter schools shall be part of the state's program of public education. A charter school may be established by creating a new school within an existing public school or converting an existing public school to charter status. This makes charter schools look different than other charter schools in the United States.

The purposes (from Iowa Code) of charter schools are to:

- Improve student learning
- Increase learning opportunities for students
- Encourage the use of different and innovative methods of teaching
- Require the measurement of learning outcomes and create different and innovative forms of measuring outcomes
- Establish new forms of accountability for schools

Although an Iowa charter school **may** elect to comply with one or more provisions of statute or administrative rule, a charter school **is exempt from all statutes and rules applicable to a school, a school board, or a school district, except:**

Health and safety laws
Anti-discrimination and civil and human rights laws
Free education for Iowa resident students between the ages of five and 21
Special education
Financial audits
Teacher quality
Chapter 20 and 279 (contracts with and discharge of teachers and administrators)
Student transportation
Open Meetings Law
180 day instructional requirement

In the five years charter schools have existed in Iowa, learning opportunities have been created at the elementary (generally K-5) and the high school (generally 9-12) level. Elementary learning opportunities have included arts integration instruction, multiage/multicultural experiences, technology integration, inquiry learning, and expeditionary learning. Secondary learning opportunities have focused on partnerships with postsecondary institutions for expanded learning opportunities, career preparation, concurrent enrollment opportunities and increased instructional rigor and relevance. These expanded learning opportunities, particularly at the elementary level, signify that the charter schools are exploring innovative methods of teaching.

Iowa Charter Schools are guided by goals developed by Iowa's charter school application to the United State Department of Education (USDE), the State Board of Education, Iowa Code, and goals developed by each charter school applicant. In its initial charter school application to the USDE, the Iowa Department of Education (DE) outlined five goals. Included are:

- Goal 1: Establish charter schools during the next three years representing a diversity of programs,
- Goal 2: Provide technical assistance for charter schools throughout development and implementation,
- Goal 3: Collect and analyze the outcomes of the charter schools against, at a minimum, the state goals for school and student improvement,
- Goal 4: "Incent," document, and disseminate best or promising practices, and
- Goal 5: Grow the Public Charter Schools Program beyond the initial pilots.

With regard to goal one, charter school legislation was passed in Iowa during the 2002 session. It allowed for a maximum of ten charter schools in Iowa. During the 2006 legislative session, the cap of charter schools was lifted in Iowa to 20; however, no additional funding was allocated. To date, Iowa has authorized ten charter schools.

With regard to goal two, Iowa charter schools partner with each other and the DE for growth. As a partner with charter schools, the DE provides technical assistance, support, monitoring, and budget management. In accordance with the Iowa Application for Charter Schools, the Iowa DE continues to provide a wide range of services to the schools already at charter status, as well as schools in the charter-planning phase. Those services are outlined below:

- On-Site Technical Assistance – Each charter school received on-site visits from the DE Charter School Director and staff.
- Pre-Opening Visit – Review of application goals and objectives, legal obligations, curriculum, budget management, and school climate. The pre-opening visit included interviews with local school board members, superintendent, parents, principal, lead teacher, advisory committee members, and charter teachers.
- Quarterly Meetings – Review of implementation and guidance for aligning instruction with research-based practices, as well as the provision for collaboration among charter school leaders.
- End-of-Year Review – Performance results, sustainability, program modifications, planning for the following year (year 2 or 3).

In order to address goal three, the DE continues to collect and analyze the outcomes of the charter schools against goals for school and student improvement:

- Each student will graduate from high school having had opportunities to take challenging, relevant courses that have prepared him/her well for success in postsecondary learning and the workplace; and
- At least 90% of all Iowa high school graduates will go on to complete, at a minimum, two year of college or postsecondary education.

Four of Iowa's charter schools are specifically targeted toward increasing opportunities for students to participate in rigorous, relevant coursework through enrollment in college level courses. These charter schools partner with area community colleges, as well as Buena Vista University, coordinating these opportunities and encouraging high school students, many considered at-risk, to complete college level courses while still in high school and receive college credit. One charter high school provides enrollees an opportunity to participate in a fifth year of high school, earning an associate's degree upon high school graduation. Other charter high schools have experienced growth in the number and percentages of their students earning college credits while enrolled in high school, ensuring their graduates experience an early start to a postsecondary education.

Goal four is centered on providing incentives, as well as documenting and disseminating best or promising practices. This goal is addressed through ongoing conversations focused on the review of the merits of the charter programs to determine their value to the state education system. Performance data are being collected on a continual basis to inform any decision-making (summarized later in this report).

Goal five involves growing the Public Charter Schools Program beyond the initial pilots. The first two Iowa charter schools achieved charter status at the beginning of the 2004-05 school year. During the following school year, 2005-06, five more charter applicants achieved charter status, four at the beginning of the school year and one mid-year. The following school year, 2006-07, one additional school was granted charter status prior to the beginning of the school year, one school achieved charter status mid-year, and one achieved charter status at the end of the year, bringing the total of charter schools in Iowa to ten. The 2006 General Assembly action led to an increase in the cap for the number of charter schools in Iowa (from 10 to 20); however, to date, no other applications for charter status have been submitted.

District/Charter	Description of Charter	Goal	Measure	Progress made to Date
<p>Iowa Central Charter High School</p> <p>Southeast Webster-Grand School District PO Box 49 Burnside, IA 50521 515/359-2235</p> <p>Dr. Mike Jorgensen, Superintendent</p> <p>Mission: To develop a fast track program that will assist students in working towards an AA degree in a specific vocational area or towards a four-year degree program.</p> <p>First year of Charter Status: 2004-05</p> <p>Number of Charter Teachers/Administrators (2006-07) = 9/2</p> <p>District Dropout Rate 2004-05 = 1.65% 2005-06 = .66%</p>	<p>A partnership with Iowa Central Community College to serve 11th and 12th grade students who have specific vocational and academic needs and want to be on a fast track to postsecondary study. The Charter School is a school within a school.</p> <p>Planning Grant: Yes – 2003-04</p>	<p>Students in the charter participate in the mid-year administration of the (Iowa Tests of Educational Development (ITED); consequently, 2003-04 data will be used as the baseline.</p> <p>1. Increase the number of graduates who complete post-secondary training.</p> <p>2. Increase math, science and reading ITED scores at grade 11.</p>	<p>1. SE Webster Graduate Data ICCHS Graduate Data.</p> <p>2. ITED scores (disaggregated).</p>	<p>1. The percentage of students earning college credit while in high school increased by 14 percentage points between 2003-04 and 2004-05, and by four percentage points between 2004-05 and 2005-06, bringing the percentage up to 100%, where it remained between 2005-06 and 2006-07. Additionally, the average number of college credits earned by graduates in the charter school increased by approximately ten credits between 2003-04 and 2004-05, by approximately two credits from 2004-05 to 2005-06, and by slightly more than two credits between 2005-06 and 2006-07.</p> <p>2. Between the 2003-04 and 2006-07 school years, the percentage of students at</p>

<p>District Ave. Daily Attendance K-8 2004-05 = 95.6% 2005-06 = 95.7%</p>		<p>3. Improve ACT composite scores.</p> <p>4. Increase the course offerings available to all students and individualize instruction to meet individual needs.</p>	<p>3. ACT.</p> <p>4. Course Enrollment Data Individual Instructional Plan Data.</p>	<p>grade 11 scoring in the proficient range of achievement on the (ITED) in reading decreased by 2.9 percentage points, increased by 4.3 percentage points, and finally increased by 14 percentage points. In mathematics, slight increases were noted, followed by a decrease in the percentage of students proficient on the ITED. In science, increases were noted for the first two years, followed by a slight decrease.</p> <p>3. The average composite score for students taking the ACT during the 2005-06 school year increased over a two-year period by .4 points and between 2005-06 and 2006-07 an increase of 3.8 points was noted.</p> <p>4. This is an action step, not a goal. The Charter School has taken steps to complete this action.</p>
---	--	---	---	---

Iowa Central Charter High School
Southeast Webster-Grand School District
PO Box 49
Burnside, IA 50521
515/359-2235

Iowa Central Charter High School				
Indicator of Success	2003-2004 (Baseline Year)	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-07
Percentage of High School Students Earning College Credit while in High School	81%	96%	100%	100%
Average College Credits Earned per High School Graduate	10.6	20.3	22.28	24.5
Average Composite Score on the ACT	21.4	21.0	21.8	24.1

Percentage of Iowa Central Charter High School Grade 11 Students Proficient on the ITED				
	2003-04 (Baseline Year)	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Reading	67.9%	65%	69.3%	83%
Mathematics	83.0%	80%	85.7%	76.6%
Science	76.8%	85%	93.8%	87.2%